

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4

NND 969042

By Jff Date 2 June '98 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ DEPARTMENT OF STATE

V-11-B

DECLASSIFIED

PA/HO Department of State

E.O. 12958, as amended

April 21, 2005

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: February 2, 1971

SUBJECT: Meeting Between the Nigerian Ambassador
and Director, Office of Nigerian Affairs

PARTICIPANTS: His Excellency Joe Iyalla, Ambassador of Nigeria
John W. Foley, Jr., Director, AF/NI

DISTRIBUTION: AF - Mr. Newsom INR/RAF
SCA - Miss Watson AF/NI
NSC - Mr. Wright Amembassy LAGOS
L/AF - Mr. Runyon

Pol

Nigeria - US

Pol 27

Biafra - Nigeria

In reporting on his recent consultations in Lagos during the period January 8-28, 1971, Ambassador Iyalla said he was under instructions to make a strong demarche upon his return about the ease with which former top leaders of the Biafran regime are being permitted to enter the United States. According to the Ambassador, their presence here was causing increasing resentment among FMG officials and could become a serious irritant in our relations. He said the subject figured prominently when the Supreme Military Council met to consider President Nixon's invitation to General Gowon for a State visit in the United States. Some members of the Council wanted the invitation to be declined, questioning how General Gowon could come to a country which welcomed individuals who tried to destroy the Nigerian Republic. Others proposed linking acceptance of the invitation with a promise by the United States to reject further visa applications by colleagues of Ojukwu. Ambassador Iyalla claimed that General Gowon was being accused of softness toward the United States in not reacting firmly to our favorable treatment of ex-Biafran officials. The General was therefore becoming very upset over our freedom of entry policy and puzzled that the United States would allow a problem of this nature to be introduced to disturb the present good relationships between the United States and Nigeria.

Ambassador Iyalla speculated that the admission of former Biafran leaders could lead to a further complication in relations when requests were made by the FMG to extradite some of them for war crimes. He indicated the pressures were building up in Nigeria to call to

AF/NI:JWFoley, Jr.:dal
(Drafting Office and Officer)

Downgraded at 12 year intervals,
not automatically declassified.

FORM DS-1254
2-55

GROUP 3 - ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

RV-31-1

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4

NND 969042

By jsf Date 2 June '98

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
April 21, 2005

2

account those responsible for the rebellion. Accordingly, he thought there was considerable likelihood that the U.S. Government would eventually be faced with warrants for arrests and extradition of top Biafrans in the United States who had helped lead the secession. Ambassador Iyalla's point was that it would be easier to deny admission now than for the U.S. Government to become involved later in extradition proceedings.

The ex-Biafrans allowed to travel to the United States about whom the Ambassador seemed particularly concerned were C.C. Mojekwu, Kenneth Dike, Augustine Okwu, and Peter Chigbo. He accused all of making anti-FMG speeches at the universities and other forums. He said Mojekwu had been especially poisonous in appearances at Amherst, Harvard and Princeton. In the case of Mojekwu, Ambassador Iyalla complained of the B-1 visa acquired by Mojekwu in Lisbon during the war which had enabled him to visit the United States freely in recent months. Ambassador Iyalla seemed to be unaware of the new application that Mojekwu has submitted to come here with his family on a non-immigrant visa to attend courses at Northwestern. I did not inform Ambassador Iyalla of Mojekwu's present effort to enter the United States as a student.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~